

~~TOP SECRET~~

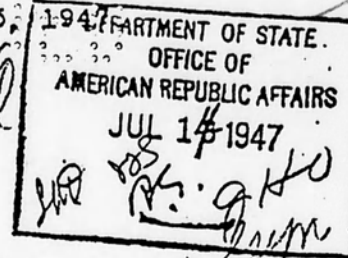
TO: Herbert J. Cummings, FC  
FROM: Vincent La Vista

SUBJECT: ILLEGAL EMIGRATION MOVEMENTS IN AND THROUGH  
ITALY

1. Reference is made to despatch No. 2385 dated January 20, 1947, from the Legation at Vienna, Department's Instruction to Rome No. 1954 dated 13 March 1947, and Vienna's despatch to Rome dated 10 April 1947, covering the above subject.
2. Attention is respectfully invited to the fact that the above-mentioned despatch from Vienna dated 10 April 1947 was classified upward from Secret to Top Secret, in which classification this subject matter should remain for the present. Attention is further respectfully invited to the fact that the subject is at present a delicate one with involved ramifications and the contents of this report should be handled discreetly and with the utmost caution.
3. A thorough investigation of the subject matter as present circumstances permit has been made, however, this investigation should not be considered complete with the present developments nor can the situation bringing about this investigation be considered remedied by this investigation report. In answer to the last paragraph of the enclosure to Vienna's Despatch No. 2385, a complete list of the Welfare Units in Rome participating in, knowingly or otherwise, illegal emigration, has been obtained, is attached hereto, and marked Appendix "A". An examination of this list of organizations and the individuals involved will readily disclose the reason for the necessity of treating this matter with the utmost discretion.
4. This writer has personally visited all of these offices and talked with most of the individuals named, and the facts herein contained are based not only on personal contact with the organizations and the individuals named, but also on the personal examination of documents, credentials, letters, passports, and all papers herein mentioned in connection with the aforementioned list (Appendix "A"). The only person whom this writer was unable to see or contact was the notorious Dr. Nix. After a very cautious investigation, this writer was able to learn that several weeks ago, the

Italian

~~TOP SECRET~~



FW 800.0128/5-1547

TOP SECRET FILE

Italian Government, after a secret investigation, had ordered the arrest of Dr. Nix. The investigation leading up to the order of arrest was handled so secretly that I have yet been unable to contact any person within the Italian Government who knew of the investigation, yet only a matter of minutes before Dr. Nix's actual apprehension, he was able to learn of his imminent arrest, and fled to the Vatican where he is now residing. It has always been suspected that Dr. Nix was operating under the benevolent protection of the Vatican. His flight and present sanctuary in Vatican City is positive proof of this fact.

5. The Vatican of course is the largest single organization involved in the illegal movement of emigrants. The second largest is the group of Jewish Agencies and individuals, and the third could be considered, not as the Hungarian alone, but as an international group of Hungarians, other Nationals, Stateless, and purely displaced persons. These three groups are by far the largest, however, they are by no means the only groups operating. On the other hand, these groups individually or collectively do not operate strictly on their own or for the benefit of those people whom they represent only; they must all necessarily and at various times and under certain conditions utilize the International Red Cross. In other words, knowingly or otherwise, it can be said that practically all illegal emigration, whether originating with these groups or not, must in some way clear through or come in contact with the International Red Cross. Unfortunately, the International Red Cross makes it a practice to send all its records to their headquarters in Geneva, as soon as practical after each case is closed here, thus making it impossible for the investigation to continue along those lines here. It is the opinion of this writer, however, that an examination of the records in Geneva of all passports issued by the International Red Cross would reveal startling and unbelievable facts.

6. The justification of the Vatican for its participation in this illegal traffic is simply the propagation of the Faith. It is the Vatican's desire to assist any person, regardless of nationality or political beliefs, as long as that person can prove himself to be a Catholic. This of course from the practical point of view is a dangerous practice. The Vatican further justifies its participation by its desire to infiltrate, not only European countries but Latin-American countries as well, with people of all political beliefs as long as they are anti-Communist and pro-Catholic Church. Knowing this, and knowing the methods of operation of Catholic agencies which are sponsoring the emigration of anti-Communists to these countries, the Communists are using these very agencies for the purpose of sending their own agents to these same countries. It

TOP SECRET

is a well-known but unprovable fact that no less than 10% of all illegal emigrants passing through Italy are Russian agents. Facts hereinafter stated indicate this very strongly.

7. The ease with which this can be done is exemplified by the Hungarian Agency sponsored by the Vatican, which is headed by Father Gallov at Via dei Parione No. 33 and Piazza dei Massimi No. 4. Father Gallov is an honest, conscientious, Catholic Priest, but he is likewise a sentimental old man. This investigator was present and witnessed an interview between two informants (who spoke native Hungarian) and Father Gallov. The two men appeared at Father Gallov's office by appointment without any personal papers, passports, or documentation of any kind and told, in perfect Hungarian, a story of just having arrived in Italy from a Labor Camp in the Russian Zone of Occupation. Both men claimed to be natives of a small village in Hungary and claimed to have lost their entire families in bombing raids during the war. The informant who was seeking help played his part so well that he broke down and cried, whereupon Father Gallov assured and re-assured him that he would help, and after requesting the man to rest a few minutes, continued the interview. He then questioned the second informant who told approximately the same story. The second informant assured Father Gallov that he knew the first informant since birth and personally knew him to be the man he represented himself to be from the little village in Austria. Father Gallov told both men that since the first informant had no birth certificate, or baptismal or other Church certificate certifying to his Catholicism, if the second informant would be willing to make affidavit under oath as to the facts, he, Father Gallov, would assist the first informant in obtaining the necessary credentials. This was agreed upon and Father Gallov prepared in longhand an affidavit on a printed form. The affidavit was brief, containing date of birth, date of baptism, name of Church, and other pertinent facts relating to the first man's life in Hungary. This was signed by the second informant and sworn to before Father Gallov. Father Gallov then wrote a short note to the International Red Cross and sent the man to the International Red Cross Office on Via Gregoriana.

8. At the International Red Cross Office, the papers were examined and the informant was instructed to obtain three passport pictures of himself, and return. The informant, of course, was prepared with the pictures but for the purpose of this investigation, asked where he could have pictures taken "safely". He was given the address of a photographer several blocks away, left the office with this investigator and the second informant, and all took a walk for about a half hour. When he returned to the International Red Cross Office, a printed form of application for a passport had already been prepared in rough, hand printing, which contained, in full, the same facts contained in the affidavit

prepared

TOP SECRET



TOP SECRET

-4-

prepared by Father Gallov. The informant was handed an International Red Cross passport which had likewise been prepared in rough, hand printing. He was asked to affix his signature, his right thumb print was affixed immediately below his signature, one of the three pictures was pasted to the passport (with ordinary library paste), another to the application, and the third was fastened to the application with a paper clip. The informant left the International Red Cross Office in the company of this writer with a perfectly valid International Red Cross passport. One week later, the same two informants appeared at Father Gallov's office, again in my presence, and this time the second informant requested help. The first informant who now identified himself by the Red Cross passport he received one week before offered to make oath to help his friend. The good Father Gallov listened to almost precisely the same story, went through precisely the same procedure, sent the second informant to the office of the International Red Cross, and after the same procedure required for the first informant, the second man was likewise issued an International Red Cross passport. Needless to say, both informants are Italian, neither ever having been outside Italy.

9. It is to be noted that although these International Red Cross passports are recognized as perfectly valid identity documents, they in fact identify nothing. The name appearing on the passport is invariably fictitious and often is one of several aliases used by the person whose picture it bears, who in turn might have in his possession numerous other passports and identity documents bearing identically the same picture which he uses at different times, under varying circumstances, for his personal benefit. It is also to be noted that the picture is affixed to the passport with ordinary paste. No seal is impressed through the picture or anywhere else on the passport, making the practice, which is in common usage in Italy, of transferring or changing pictures, a very simple one. This is likewise true with the thumb print which is affixed. The thumb print is never clearly made nor legible. It is made from an ordinary ink pad and never "rolled" but rather only pressed, thus making a classification count impossible. All seals used by the International Red Cross on these passports are ordinary rubber stamps which do not make perforations or impressions on the paper. It is such a simple matter to alter these passports by simply changing the pictures that a purchase and sale traffic exists in the prepared documents. How many dealers engaging in the traffic in fake International Red Cross passports, who have obtained them by going back repeatedly under assumed names or aliases, will never be known. As a matter of fact, "repeaters" can never be found out unless every picture in the International Red Cross passport files in Geneva is examined and compared.

10. The example

TOP SECRET

10. The example given hereinabove involving Father Gallov and his Free-Austrian Committee, is not an isolated case nor an isolated mode of procedure. That is the procedure followed by every agency operating under the benevolent sponsorship of the Vatican. Needless to say, all of the Agencies operating in conjunction with or under the protection of the Vatican are financed by Vatican funds. No attempt was made to ascertain the amount of these funds, their origin, or their method of distribution, but it is the observation of this writer that substantial sums are being spent generously in the promotion of this work.

11. The next group in importance engaging in illegal emigration is the group of Jewish Agencies of which the most important is the American Joint Distribution Committee with offices at Via San Basilio No. 9.

12. Although it is presumably the function of the American Joint Distribution Committee to sponsor and find homes for displaced Jewish refugees in the United States in accordance with International agreement, and to care for those people here pending their departure for the United States, actual activities in which this organization engages cover a wide field. Likewise in the case of this organization as in the case of other Jewish Relief Agencies operating here, it is their desire to resettle homeless Jews and to assist them with a new start in life. That is again, the justification for their operations; however, it is likewise again not practical from the international point of view. An outstanding, typical example of illegal operations participated in by the American Joint Distribution Committee is the case of Jakot Gotz and Osias Pfeffer, two alleged Polish-Jews.

13. These two individuals appeared at the offices of the American Joint Distribution Committee in June 1946, and represented themselves to be Polish Jews who had just entered Italy from the Russian Zone of Occupation. They made a strong case to justify, in the opinion of the American Joint Distribution Committee, emigration to the United States. The two individuals, after giving necessary and pertinent false information concerning themselves, were billeted in a displaced persons camp and an application was made on their behalf to the International Red Cross for emigration to the United States. The usual letters and telegrams were then obtained by the American Joint Distribution Committee from sponsors in the United States, which letters and telegrams indicated that the sponsors in the United States were given the information to be contained in the letter, or in all probability were sent prepared letters to sign. For the purpose of succeeding in obtaining permission to send these men to the United States, a completely imaginary life history was prepared for them and certified to as correct by the

American

American Joint Distribution Committee. It is to be noted that all "sponsors" selected by the American Joint Distribution Committee are selected by them alone and in no case known to this writer, did any sponsor ever know previously the emigrant he was selected to sponsor. Some time thereafter, these two men were apprehended by military authorities here for some minor infraction and were held for questioning by the CIC. At the time of their arrest, they had in their possession copies of the letters from their American sponsors together with copies of telegrams likewise received from these American sponsors. Careful questioning by the Agent disclosed that the information contained in the letters was of necessity completely fictitious since the writer of the letter could only have known certain parts of the information contained therein from intimate personal knowledge of the individual, which in this case could never have existed, since the individual had never been in the United States and the sponsor had never been in Poland. When the CIC agent who made this investigation confronted the American Joint Distribution Committee with these facts, they reluctantly admitted that as a matter of fact all they knew about Gotz and Pfeffer was what was told to them by the two men, that, as a matter of fact, they knew absolutely nothing about the two men prior to the day on which they came to the American Joint Distribution Committee Office, and that no collateral or independent investigation was made of these two men nor of any other displaced Jew whose emigration is sponsored by this organization.

14. Although the signed statements of these two subjects indicated that they spoke only Jewish and Polish, when they were placed in a cell together, and a Yugoslav-speaking guard was stationed out of sight but within hearing distance, they spoke to each other in Slavish only. Further investigation before the release of these men by the CIC definitely established that these two men did not arrive in Italy in June, 1946, but had been in Italy and in Rome for approximately 18 months prior to that date, having come to Italy directly from Yugoslavia. Although further facts could not be proven, it was definitely established that their departure from Yugoslavia and their entry into Italy 18 months prior to June, 1946, was legal. The only conclusion which can be made from this fact is that Gotz and Pfeffer are not Polish/Jewish refugees but rather are either Russian or Slav agents attempting to enter the United States via this channel. It is a conclusive fact that any person who left Yugoslavia 18 months prior to June, 1946, legally, had to leave under Yugoslav Government sponsorship. The only conclusion, therefore, must be that the two men, Gotz and Pfeffer, are either Yugoslav Agents or Russian Agents.

15. Although the above is merely one of many such cases, it is a well-known and undeniable fact that the Jewish plan or scheme in this emigration movement in and through Italy is not only facilitated by documents issued by the American Joint Distribution Committee, but is actually promoted and encouraged by this Agency. It is the observation of this investigator that the only pre-requisite to establishing identity as a displaced Jewish refugee is the ability to speak Jewish (not Hebrew) and the language of the country

from



which the Jew was supposed to have come. It seems further that after the individuals have qualified by that ability only, the American Joint Distribution Committee from that point on creates the necessary background personal history for their successful emigration. It is not to be assumed, however, that the American Joint Distribution Committee engages in this phase only, of illegal emigration through Italy. The Jewish underground now operating in Italy for the sole purpose of assisting emigration to Egypt and Palestine is one of the most efficient underground organizations with which this writer has ever come in contact. As a matter of fact, there is no force in Italy of the Italian Government, or otherwise, capable of stopping its activities or even seriously interfering with it.

16. During the course of this investigation, reliable information came from a previously unimpeachable source to the effect that this Jewish underground was at present operating several LTC landing craft from somewhere along the Yugoslav coast to a point in the vicinity of Bari. Investigation of this information in the company of this writer's informant proved this to be a fact. It was further learned that more than one such craft was engaged in this traffic, but the exact number could not be learned. It was further learned that several trips per week are made and that at least thirty passengers are carried on each voyage. The ownership of the craft and the operators thereof could not be further identified except that the persons who arrived in Bari and Italy via that route were invariably traced to Jewish Agencies via known contacts in the Jewish underground. Further investigation disclosed that those arriving via this route did not remain in Italy for great lengths of time but disappeared within a matter of weeks. It was then found that they were leaving Italy through Bari and were never seen in Italy again. Since the Jews departing from Bari are far greater numerically than those arriving in Bari from Yugoslavia, an extensive investigation was made to ascertain from where they came and to where they were going. In pursuing this phase of the investigation, facts were obtained from the same source of information previously used, which indicated that some type of vessel was leaving Italy from a point in the vicinity of Bari, destined for Palestine or Egypt and that regular monthly trips were being made. Information also indicated that approximately one thousand passengers were being carried each trip and that passengers could actually be "booked" through certain contacts in the Jewish underground in Rome. This investigator, in the company of two informants, made contact with a member of the Jewish underground through an intermediary to whom representations were made that we were three Jewish displaced persons whose papers were all in order, awaiting our turn for transportation to Palestine. We stated further that we had the means with which to pay for passage rather than await free transportation to be arranged by and at the expense of our sponsoring agency.

Within

Within a matter of hours, our contact had made arrangements for passage to Palestine on an LST landing craft leaving from Bari within the week. We were informed that the charge for this passage was 500,000 lire per person and that we were to pay the money to the contact the following day, at which time he would tell us to whom to report in Bari and precisely the day and time. It was agreed to meet the following day for the purpose of paying the money. However, a request was made for some kind of assurance or guarantee that we would reach Palestine in safety. In the course of this discussion, we were told that such guarantee could not be given since, due to the British sea blockade, it might be possible that the landing could not be made in Palestine but that in that eventuality, landing would be made on the coast of Egypt from which point, safety and transportation into Palestine would be provided by the Jewish underground there. Since we had proven the fact that this clandestine traffic actually existed between Italy and Palestine, no attempt was made to further identify the contact who had made these arrangements, since, in all probability, he is a small and unimportant cog in the wheel which is the Jewish underground. Needless to say, we did not appear for the purpose of paying the money the following day.

17. Although the water route for Jewish emigration by LTC's from the Yugoslav coast to Bari has been up to now the most extensively-used route to Italy, it is by no means the only route; on the contrary, it is believed that this mode of travel was created and developed during this past winter when overland travel through the mountain passes across the Italian border was rendered impossible due to an extremely severe winter and unusually heavy snowfalls. The overland route across the border has now reached such large proportions that an estimated five hundred Jewish displaced persons cross the border each week on foot. In spite of all attempted controls, this method of entering Italy is so simple that it is merely a matter of walking across the border and, if apprehended, being turned back to try again the next day. The process is repeated until success is achieved. Once in Italy, still without passports, travel permits, or identification documents of any kind, the emigrant makes his way by any means possible to Rome, where he either reports to any one of the Jewish displaced persons camps or to any one of the Jewish relief agencies listed in Appendix "A", and from that time on, the agency makes proper and necessary provision for the individual. Since travel to Italy by LTC is expensive, uncertain, and dangerous, it is likely that during the coming summer months, it will diminish or cease entirely in favor of the less complicated and less expensive method of walking across the border.

#### 18. The Jewish



TOP SECRET

18. The Jewish displaced persons camps operated in the vicinity of Rome, while apparently serving the purpose for which they were intended are in fact an inexplicable enigma. In every case, the Administrative staffs of the camps are either furnished by the Jewish Relief agencies or they are under the control or domination of the Jewish Relief agencies. In addition, it is a well-known and not-too-secret fact that these camps are the center of activity of the Jewish underground. Food and clothing for these camps are supplied by UNRRA. This writer in the company of an informant visited one of these camps which carried on its rolls at the time of the visit over one thousand inmates. A cautious and discreet investigation, conducted by questioning unimportant members of the staff, indicated that the administration of that camp had drawn for that very week clothing, blankets, linen, and food for one thousand inmates, yet there were actually and physically less than five hundred residents at the camp on that particular day. In addition, it was found that it was physically impossible to determine whether the inmates who were actually there were the same individuals who were there the week before. Although the camp is properly for displaced persons with a permanent status, it is a proven fact that the same name has been used by individuals known to be different persons, in the same camp, at different times. In the course of the investigation at this camp, this writer personally identified an inmate to be, for example, "John Doe, Inmate No. 650", with a displaced person's permanent status, and a permanent resident in this camp. The inmate was a man in his middle 40's, approximately six feet tall, weighing about 180 lbs., blonde hair, and blue eyes. Several weeks later, the same "John Doe, Inmate No. 650" was again seen; this time, he was a man perhaps in his middle 20's with an entirely different description, yet professed to be the same "John Doe, Inmate No. 650" who had been a resident in that camp for upwards of one year. In other words, the names of the inmates with permanent status in the displaced persons camps never change; the individuals bearing those names do.

19. This method of operation of the Jewish displaced persons camps serves two purposes very efficiently. First; it covers up the number of Jewish displaced persons under assumed names and addresses, both coming into Italy and going out of Italy, and makes possible the obtaining for them of the necessary identity documents or passports. There is absolutely no way of proving or disproving the true identity of any one of these individuals. Secondly; up to now, the black market sales of rations drawn from UNRRA are, in the opinion of this writer, the largest source of income for both the Jewish underground and the legitimate Jewish relief agencies operating in Italy. The amount or value of clothing and food drawn from UNRRA legitimately, which has been disposed of in the black market, will never be known. The sale value of the articles and foodstuffs which find their way into the black market through this channel is so vast that it can reasonably be assumed that it yields sufficient cash funds to finance the entire Jewish underground organization operating in Italy. UNRRA alone is not to blame for the existence

of this

TOP SECRET

TOP SECRET

of this condition nor is the American Joint Distribution Committee. The situation was apparently created with the inauguration of UNRRA and later the American Joint Distribution Committee at their respective inceptions in Italy, and was permitted to grow until it has now broken all bounds and gotten beyond control. Since, however, both UNRRA and the American Joint Distribution Committee are permitted to operate with complete immunity from the Italian authorities, unscrupulous individuals and agencies have maliciously used the names of both organizations to their personal or collective advantage. For example, vehicles bearing the name of either agency travel through Italy without fear of being molested by the Italian authorities, yet it is a known fact that vehicles bearing the names of either of these organizations have and are still transporting contraband and illegal refugees, but the vehicles so used have absolutely no official connection with either of these two organizations.

20. The Vatican and the Jewish agencies are by no means the only source of help and encouragement in the actual movement of displaced persons in and through Italy. There is a general movement of displaced persons of all denominations and political beliefs across the Italian border to various destinations and for various purposes. There is, for example, a general movement of Germans, Austrians, Hungarians, Poles, Yugoslavs, and even Russians, who cross the border via Treviso and Milan for the sole purpose of obtaining false identity documents and re-entering legally the British, French, or American Occupation Zones. In this category, there has been and still are large groups of Nazi-Germans who come into Italy for the sole purpose of obtaining fictitious identity documents, passports, and visas, and leave almost immediately via Genoa and Barcelona for Latin America. Included in this group can also be found from time to time small groups of Italian-Fascists, who together with the Nazi-Germans make their way to Latin America with the help of the established German agents operating in Barcelona (see Appendix "B"). A large part of this group makes its way from Barcelona to Mexico, Argentina, and Cuba, Argentina being the largest recipient and Mexico, the second largest, with the other Latin American countries each receiving smaller numbers. This appeared to be an inexplicable situation but further investigation indicated that in those Latin American countries where the Church is a controlling or dominating factor, the Vatican has brought pressure to bear which has resulted in the foreign missions of those countries taking an attitude almost favoring the entry into their country of former Nazi and former Fascists or other political groups, so long as they are anti-Communist. That, in fact, is the practice in effect in the Latin American Consulates and Missions in Rome at the present time.

#### 21. The basic

TOP SECRET

TOP SECRET

-11-

21. The basic facts herein contained were not previously unknown to this writer; the facts were, however, developed for the purpose of this report. Likewise, the facts contained in Appendices "B", "C", and "D" attached hereto and made a part hereof, were extracted from reports of the CIC, which reports were made as a result of an investigation starting late in 1946 and still in progress. Since we knew all these facts and had developed them as indicated herein, it is certainly not unreasonable to assume that these facts are likewise known to the interested agencies of USSR and to Yugoslavia. As a matter of fact, all indications are that these two countries are not only aware of these facts and more, but it is strongly suspected, but not yet provable, that both countries not only encouraged continuance of this situation but are actually promoting and propagating this emigration for the purpose of channeling its own agents into other European countries and the Western Hemisphere by these very methods. As a further matter of fact, the informant who produced the information concerning the traffic via LTC's and LST's insists that both groups of landing craft were supplied and placed in operation anonymously by Russian agents. This, however, has not yet been proven to the satisfaction of this writer.

22. The facts contained herein are those developed thus far but this investigation should by no means be deemed complete or closed. The undisputed fact remains that the number of authentic displaced persons in Italy will never be known. Reliable estimates are that there are upwards of one hundred thousand, but equally reliable estimates place the number at approximately one million. There is absolutely no way of knowing exactly who in Italy is a legitimate displaced person, and who is not. There are so many forged and fictitious passports and identity documents in circulation that their actual number will never be known. To complete this investigation and to cover it comprehensively will require many more man hours of cautious and discreet investigation, however, the investigation will proceed and further facts will be reported as developed.

Hectograph and one copy  
to Department  
One copy to American Legation,  
Vienna.

VLaV:cmb

TOP SECRET